

Amendments to the Claims

Kindly amend claims 1, 15, 31, 43 & 56 as set forth below. All pending claims are reproduced below, with changes in the amended claims shown by underlining (for added matter) and strikethrough/double brackets (for deleted matter).

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing resource allocations within an intellectual property portfolio, said method comprising:

(i) determining available resource capacity for an intellectual property activity managed via a computer tracking system;

(ii) assigning technology tags to the activity in the computer tracking system, the technology tags representing different technology areas of interest;

(iii) apportioning the available resource capacity for the activity to the different technology areas of interest in the computer tracking system based on a ~~priority~~ value assigned to each technology area of interest;

(iv) obtaining actual resource usage by technology area from the computer tracking system; and

(v) employing the computer tracking system in providing a report indicative of the difference between the actual resource usage and the resource allocation by technology areas of interest for use in managing resource allocation for the intellectual property activity.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said employing (v) comprises proactively managing resource allocation for the intellectual property activity by determining the difference between the actual resource usage and the resource allocation by technology area of interest.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising for a given time period, periodically repeating the obtaining (iv) and the employing (v) to achieve within the given time period set goals for the intellectual property activity based on assigned technology tags.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 3, wherein the assigning technology tags comprises assigning technology based descriptors to different technology fields of the intellectual property activity.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 4, wherein the employing (v) comprises dynamically adjusting, within the given time period, resource allocation to at least one technology field of the intellectual property activity.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the employing (v) comprises periodically assembling the report including the actual resource usage by technology areas of interest and set goals for the intellectual property activity based on assigned technology tags.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 6, wherein the periodically assembled report further includes the actual resource usage by technology area of interest for a first time period and the actual resource usage by technology area of interest for a second time period, wherein the second time period is longer than the first time period.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein the employing (v) comprises comparing the actual resource usage by technology areas of interest for the first time period and the actual resource usage by technology areas of interest for the second time period, and based thereon, proactively adjusting resource allocation by technology areas of interest for the intellectual property activity to achieve the set goals.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the first time period is less than five months and the second time period is at least two times the first time period.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the first time period is in a range of two to four months and the second time period is at least three times the first time period.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises at least one of (1) modulating invention disclosure creation activity, (2) evaluating invention disclosures, (3) searching inventions based on evaluated invention disclosures, (4) filing patent applications based on evaluated invention disclosures, (5) issuing patents, and (6) maintaining issued patents.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising setting intellectual property activity goals, the setting including at least some of: (1) understanding current and future opportunity space for a business; (2) understanding the current intellectual property portfolio; (3) identifying technology fields requiring intellectual property development; (4) setting intellectual property development guidelines; and (5) identifying and communicating specific technology opportunities; and wherein the employing (v) comprises proactively managing the resource allocation by technology tag to achieve the intellectual property activity goals.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises invention development, and wherein the employing (v) comprises proactively managing resource allocation to achieve invention development goals using the actual resource usage and the prior resource allocation by technology areas of interest.

14. (Canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) A method for managing invention disclosures, comprising:

determining a desired number of invention disclosures based on available resources;

apportioning the desired number of invention disclosures by a plurality of technology tags, representing different technology areas of interest, based on a ~~priority~~ value assigned to each of the technology areas of interest;

tracking via a computer tracking system an actual number of invention disclosures by technology area of interest and employing the computer tracking system in providing a report indicative of the difference between the actual number of invention disclosures and the desired number of invention disclosures; and

using the report to proactively manage at least one of invention disclosure creation and invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or patent application filing.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein said tracking comprises periodically generating from the computer tracking system the report to facilitate said proactive managing.

17. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the report includes the actual number of invention disclosures by technology tag for a first time period and the actual number of invention disclosures by technology tag for a second time period, wherein the second time period is longer than the first time period.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the second time period is inclusive of the first time period.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the first time period is less than five months and the second time period is at least two times the first time period.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein said proactive managing comprises proactively taking action or adjusting criteria to achieve set goals for a given time period for said at least one of invention disclosure creation, and invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or patent application filing.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 20, wherein said technology tags comprise at least one of technology-based descriptors or location-based descriptors, and wherein said method further comprises assigning a technology tag to each actual invention disclosure for use by said computer tracking system.

22. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 21, wherein said proactive managing comprises adjusting at least one of invention disclosure creation, invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching, and patent application filing responsive to the comparing.

23. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the periodically assembled report includes the actual number of invention disclosures by technology areas of interest for a first time period and the actual number of invention disclosures by technology areas of interest for a second time period, wherein the second time period is longer than the first time period, and wherein the employing comprises comparing the actual number of invention disclosures by technology area of interest for the first time period and the actual number of invention disclosures by technology area of interest for the second time period, and wherein the proactive managing comprises responsive thereto, adjusting criteria to achieve set goals for at least one of invention disclosure creation, and invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or patent application filing.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, further comprising identifying the set goals, the identifying including at least some of: (1) understanding current and future opportunities space for a business; (2) understanding the current intellectual property portfolio; (3) identifying technology fields requiring intellectual property development; (4) setting intellectual property development objectives; and (5) identifying and communicating specific technology opportunities.

25. (Previously Presented) A computer memory comprising:

a data structure for facilitating managing resource allocations within an intellectual property portfolio, said data structure comprising:

a first field including actual resource usage for an intellectual property activity by technology areas of interest over a first time period;

a second field including actual resource usage for the intellectual property activity by technology areas of interest over a second time period, wherein the second time period is longer than the first time period; and

wherein comparison of information within the first field and the second field facilitates managing resource allocations for the intellectual property activity within the intellectual property portfolio.

26. (Original) The data structure of claim 25, wherein the second time period is inclusive of the first time period.

27. (Original) The data structure of claim 26, wherein the first time period is less than five months and the second time period is at least two times the first time period.

28. (Original) The data structure of claim 26, wherein the first time period is in a range of two to four months and the second time period is at least three times the first time period.

29. (Previously Presented) The data structure of claim 25, further comprising a third field including a set goal for a given time period for resource usage for the intellectual property activity by technology areas of interest.

30. (Original) The data structure of claim 25, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises at least one of (1) modulating invention disclosure creation activity, (2) evaluating invention disclosures, (3) searching inventions based on evaluated invention disclosures, (4) filing patent applications based on evaluated invention disclosures, (5) issuing patents, and (6) maintaining issued patents.

31. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for managing resource allocations within an intellectual property portfolio, said apparatus comprising:

means for determining available resource capacity for an intellectual property activity managed via a computer tracking system;

means for assigning technology tags to the activity in the computer tracking system, the technology tags representing different technology areas of interest;

means for apportioning the available resource capacity for the activity to the different technology areas of interest in the computer tracking system based on a ~~priority~~ value assigned to each technology area of interest;

means for obtaining actual resource usage by technology area from the computer tracking system; and

means for employing the computer tracking system in providing a report indicative of the difference between the actual resource usage and the resource allocation by technology areas of interest for use in managing resource allocation for the intellectual property activity.

32. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein said means for employing (v) comprises means for proactively managing resource allocation for the intellectual property activity by determining the difference between the actual resource usage and the resource allocation by technology area of interest.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32, further comprising for a given time period, means for periodically repeating the means for obtaining and the means for employing to achieve within the given time period set goals for the intellectual property activity based on assigned technology tags.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 33, wherein the means for assigning technology tags comprises means for assigning technology based descriptors to different technology fields of the intellectual property activity.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the means for employing comprises means for dynamically adjusting, within the given time period, resource allocation to at least one technology field of the intellectual property activity.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the means for employing comprises means for periodically assembling the report including the actual resource usage by technology areas of interest and set goals for the intellectual property activity based on assigned technology tags.

37. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 36, wherein the periodically assembled report further includes the actual resource usage by technology tag for a first time period and the actual resource usage by technology tag for a second time period, wherein the second time period is longer than the first time period.

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the means for employing comprises means for comparing the actual resource usage by technology tag for the first time period and the actual resource usage by technology tag for the second time period, and based thereon, means for proactively adjusting resource allocation by technology areas of interest for the intellectual property activity to achieve the set goals.

39. (Original) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises at least one of (1) modulating invention disclosure creation activity, (2) evaluating invention disclosures, (3) searching inventions based on evaluated invention disclosures, (4) filing patent applications based on evaluated invention disclosures, (5) issuing patents, and (6) maintaining issued patents.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31, further comprising means for setting intellectual property activity goals, the setting including at least some of: (1) understanding current and future opportunity space for a business; (2) understanding the current intellectual property portfolio; (3) identifying technology fields requiring intellectual property development; (4) setting intellectual property development objectives; and (5) identifying and communicating specific technology opportunities; and wherein the means for employing comprises proactively managing the resource allocation by technology areas of interest to achieve the intellectual property activity goals.

41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 31, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises invention development, and wherein the means for employing comprises means for proactively managing resource allocation to achieve invention development goals using the actual resource usage and the prior resource allocation by technology areas of interest.

42. (Canceled).

43. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for managing invention disclosures, comprising:

means for determining a desired number of invention disclosures based on available resources;

means for apportioning the desired number of invention disclosures by a plurality of technology tags, representing different technology areas of interest, based on a ~~priority~~ value assigned to each of the technology areas of interest;

means for tracking via a computer tracking system an actual number of invention disclosures by technology area of interest and means for employing the computer tracking system in providing a report indicative of the difference between the actual number of invention disclosures by technology area of interest and the desired number of invention disclosures; and

means for using the report to proactively manage at least one of invention disclosure creation, and invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or patent application filing.

44. (Previously Presented) At least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of managing resource allocations within an intellectual property portfolio, said method comprising:

(i) determining available resource capacity for an intellectual property activity managed via a computer tracking system;

(ii) assigning technology tags to the activity in the computer tracking system, the technology tags representing different technology areas of interest;

(iii) apportioning the available resource capacity for the activity to the different technology areas of interest in the computer tracking system based on a value assigned to each technology area of interest;

(iv) obtaining actual resource usage by technology area from the computer tracking system; and

(v) employing the computer tracking system in providing a report indicative of the difference between the actual resource usage and the resource allocation by technology areas of interest for use in managing resource allocation for the intellectual property activity.

45. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 44, wherein said employing (v) comprises proactively managing resource allocation for the intellectual property activity by determining the difference between the actual resource usage and the resource allocation by technology area of interest.

46. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 45, further comprising for a given time period, periodically repeating the obtaining (iv) and the employing (v) to achieve within the given time period set goals for the intellectual property activity based on assigned technology tags.

47. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 46, wherein the assigning technology tags comprises assigning technology based descriptors to different technology fields of the intellectual property activity.

48. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 47, wherein the employing (v) comprises dynamically adjusting, within the given time period, resource allocation to at least one technology field of the intellectual property activity.

49. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 44, wherein the employing (v) comprises periodically assembling the report including the actual resource usage by technology areas of interest and set goals for the intellectual property activity based on assigned technology tags.

50. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 49, wherein the periodically assembled report further includes the actual resource usage by technology area of interest for a first time period and the actual resource usage by technology area of interest for a second time period, wherein the second time period is longer than the first time period.

51. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 50, wherein the employing (v) comprises comparing the actual resource usage by technology area of interest for the first time period and the actual resource usage by technology area of interest for the second time period, and based thereon, proactively adjusting resource allocation by technology areas of interest for the intellectual property activity to achieve the set goals.

52. (Original) The at least one program storage device of claim 44, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises at least one of (1) modulating invention disclosure creation activity, (2) evaluating invention disclosures, (3) searching inventions based on evaluated invention disclosures, (4) filing patent applications based on evaluated invention disclosures, (5) issuing patents, and (6) maintaining issued patents.

53. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 44, further comprising setting intellectual property activity goals, the setting including at least some of: (1) understanding current and future opportunity space for a business; (2) understanding the current intellectual property portfolio; (3) identifying technology fields requiring intellectual property development; (4) setting intellectual property development objectives; and (5) identifying and communicating specific technology opportunities; and wherein the employing (v) comprises proactively managing the resource allocation by technology areas of interest to achieve the intellectual property activity goals.

54. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 44, wherein the intellectual property activity comprises invention development, and wherein the employing (v) comprises proactively managing resource allocation to achieve invention development goals using the actual resource usage and the prior resource allocation by technology areas of interest.

55. (Canceled).

56. (Currently Amended) At least one program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the machine to perform a method of managing invention disclosures, said method comprising:

determining a desired number of invention disclosures based on available resources;

apportioning the desired number of invention disclosures by a plurality of technology areas of interest based on a ~~priority~~ value assigned to each technology areas of interest;

tracking via a computer tracking system an actual number of invention disclosures by technology area of interest and employing the computer tracking system in providing a report indicative of the different between the actual number of invention disclosures and the desired number of invention disclosures; and

using the report to proactively manage at least one of invention disclosure creation and invention disclosure evaluation for patent searching or patent application filing.

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